



**CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
STAFF REPORT**

<b>Meeting Date:</b> January 4, 2023		<b>Subject: Update on Response to the Mediterranean Oak Borer (MOB)</b>	
		<b>Staff Member:</b> Chris Neamtzu, AICP, Community Development Director and Georgia McAlister, Associate Planner	
		<b>Department:</b> Community Development	
<b>Action Required</b>		<b>Advisory Board/Commission Recommendation</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing Date: <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading Date: <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading Date: <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution <input type="checkbox"/> Information or Direction <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Only <input type="checkbox"/> Council Direction <input type="checkbox"/> Consent Agenda		<input type="checkbox"/> Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Denial <input type="checkbox"/> None Forwarded <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable	
		<b>Comments:</b> N/A	
<b>Staff Recommendation:</b> Staff recommends that Council receive the Mediterranean Oak Borer response update and provide any direction.			
<b>Recommended Language for Motion:</b> N/A			
<b>Project / Issue Relates To:</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Council Goals/Priorities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted Master Plan(s) Urban Forest Management Plan (2021)	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable	

**ISSUE BEFORE COUNCIL:**

Staff desires to provide the City Council with an update on the City’s response to Mediterranean Oak Borer (MOB).

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

In October, staff completed the preparation of a Mediterranean Oak Borer (MOB) Status Report, which is included as Attachment A. Prior to that, the City Manager created a multi-disciplinary team of staff members from the Community Development, Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments to respond to the MOB infestation. This is an evolving situation that will change over time with the addition of information, knowledge, field observations, and real science that will inform and adjust the City's approach and response.

To date, the core coordination team has met a total of seven (7) times, meetings are bi-weekly. On average, planning staff is being contacted once to twice a week from citizens inquiring about MOB. Additionally, several Oregon white oak trees have been removed in the community over the past two months. The City's state of emergency declaration expired on December 29, 2023. At this point, the initial responses are complete and staff sees no compelling reason to continue the state of emergency.

### Oregon Department of Agriculture and Oregon Department of Forestry coordination:

On November 30, City staff met with staff from Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) and Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to coordinate on recent statewide activities. Due to the newness of this insect in Oregon and the lack of empirical research and associated knowledge very little clear direction is available at this point in time. The City's proactive application of insecticides and fungicides in a wide variety of publically important oak trees, some of which had clear signs of MOB, will become a case study for on-going research regarding what approaches work and which might not work. While there is little existing evidence regarding the success of treatment the prevailing belief of experts is the treatment will be most successful when both an insecticide and fungicide are proactively applied prior to the evidence of the presence of MOB. The City treated Oregon white oaks (OWO) without indication of MOB as well as OWOs displaying symptoms.

Spring and summer of 2024 will present observation opportunities that will be the basis of future recommendations regarding management. Observations to date by ODF/ODA staff reveal that MOB prefers trees that are stressed (keep in mind that all of our oaks are stressed in one way or another due to climate change, drought, more severe storms, etc.), have fungus, insect damage or have otherwise experienced damage or breakage from ice. Many of the recent field observations suggest that the MOB may be a secondary cause of tree death, not the primary cause.

ODA is planning on extensive expansion of the MOB trapping effort that had been undertaken over the past two-years. Traps will be placed in a grid pattern statewide in an effort to understand more completely the geographic extent of the infestation. This work is on-going with the majority of collection occurring April-September of 2024. If the geographic extent is narrow, then a quarantine could be proposed similar to the Emerald ash borer. Time will be needed to determine the extent of infestation.

ODA and ODF staff are also writing grants that will allow them to test and study different aspects of the insect, even going as far as traveling to Europe to better understand what native insects might provide controls for the MOB. The new North Valley Complex that now houses ODA on 95<sup>th</sup> Avenue contains an isolation lab where biological controls can be tested and refined. Other guidance provided emphasizes the importance of promoting tree health in general. Providing trees with simple nutrients and supplemental irrigation are two things that citizens can do to keep their oak populations healthy.

#### Disposal Options:

As Council is aware, staff coordinated with Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to utilize their air curtain incinerator (ACI) to burn infected wood from Frog Pond West and the SMART Transit Center over the course of four days in October (October 9-12). The ACI was operated at the site of the future Advance Road Community Park. The operation went smoothly for the most part being the first attempt by ODA to destroy large amounts of wood debris with the ACI. Much was learned by the certified operator, who is an ODA employee, regarding best practices for future operation.

From the City's perspective, the operation went much slower and eliminated far less infected tree material than we had hoped. The operation was shut down for one of the days due to high winds. Given that there needs to be an equipment operator present at most times to feed wood into the ACI, the costs outweighed the benefits for this operation and there are no current plans to bring the ACI back although ODA has offered the unit. At the end of the four days, the City was still left with a very large pile that weighed over 53 tons that had to be removed as the ACI moved on to another location. With no good cost-effective options for disposal Staff investigated, and ultimately ended up taking the remaining infected wood to the landfill in Hillsboro where it was deep buried. Trucking and disposal costs associated with this operation totaled \$13,440.

#### ProGrass Oak:

Sadly, the ProGrass oak tree, a 59" DBH heritage tree, was removed on October 26 and 27. The removal was prompted due to it becoming a hazard to the motoring and pedestrian public as a result of the large dead scaffold branches hanging over the public right-of-way. The tree was hauled to the back of the ProGrass warehouse on Kinsman Road and covered with visqueen consistent with recommended disposal methods.

#### Charbonneau:

Consulting arborist Morgan Holen and Public Works staff conducted a window survey of the over 800 mature red oaks (*Quercus rubra*) along French Prairie Road to determine if there was evidence present of possible MOB infestation in oak species other than Oregon white oak. In California, MOB has been found in several other native oak species. Fortunately, the windshield survey did not reveal any observed infections of MOB in red oak.

### MOB Map and Cartegraph Presentation:

Public Works staff prepared a MOB Response Tracking Dashboard in Cartegraph, the City's asset management software, that documents where and when MOB observations and treatments have occurred. This platform will be outward facing on the city website and will provide community members with vital information regarding the identification, location and condition of Oregon white oaks community wide. This database will allow the Cartegraph software to inform staff when additional treatments may be necessary, and can include photos or field notes of tree condition. This is a powerful tool that allows for the on-going management of location, health, condition, and treatment. Staff will provide a demonstration of the software at the upcoming Council briefing.

### OWO Tree Removals

In addition to the Frog Pond Estates and ProGrass Oaks, four other OWO trees confirmed to be infested with MOB have been removed, to the City's knowledge. Two trees in open spaces within the Villebois neighborhood and Frog Pond neighborhoods were removed in November. Debris from the removed trees in Villebois were chipped and taken to a facility aware of the infestation. Debris from the Frog Pond OWOs remains on site and covered in visqueen.

### **EXPECTED RESULTS:**

MOB is going to be a significant issue for the community for the foreseeable future. Staff is on the leading edge of knowledge and is charting approaches far ahead of any other municipality in Oregon. The expected results will be to protect the oaks that we have and prevent further degradation of this precious resource.

Parks staff presented findings of our efforts at a recent Oregon Parks and Recreation conference. Maintenance staff from numerous local jurisdictions are planning on coming to Wilsonville in the spring to conduct tours and learn more about our local approach. Additionally, Oregon Community Trees, the states non-profit urban forestry advisory board will convene their quarterly board meeting in Wilsonville in March, with a special focus and presentations by city staff on MOB.

### **TIMELINE:**

Timelines are ongoing.

### **CURRENT YEAR BUDGET IMPACTS:**

Staff is utilizing CIP #9088 Oregon white oak fund and #9179 Urban Forest Climate Resilience, both of which have sufficient funds this fiscal year to cover anticipated work. To date, \$21,000 has been spent on treatments for trees, another \$57,000 on arborists, ACI site preparation and operation, equipment, tree removal, and disposal at the land fill.

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROCESS:**

Staff is in consistent communication with citizens, tree companies, homeowners associations (HOA) and other interested parties regarding the dissemination of information regarding how to identify MOB as well as providing options for proper disposal.

In November, the Park at Merryfield HOA reached out to the City with questions regarding MOB and its potential impact on their neighborhood. Members of Planning and Parks met with three HOA representatives to discuss the risk of MOB at Park at Merryfield, share educational materials, and information, answer questions and help the HOA develop a plan for the spring. A certified arborist on the Parks team conducted a visual survey of the neighborhood's open space in December at their request. With the close proximity to Graham Oaks Nature Park, it is encouraging to work with an HOA ready to take a proactive approach to protect the community's trees.

Additionally, Staff will be providing a briefing for the Charbonneau board at their regular meeting in February.

**POTENTIAL IMPACTS OR BENEFIT TO THE COMMUNITY:**

A healthy, thriving urban forest that includes Oregon white oak promotes many benefits to quality of life and livability of the Wilsonville community.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

Council can direct staff on any number of alternatives. None are recommended at this time.

**CITY MANAGER COMMENT:**

N/A

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. MOB Status Report